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PEPERO, THE BOY ARTIST

A MEMOIR OF
JAMES JACKSON JARVES JR.
BY HIS FATHER



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JAMES JACKSON JARVES

Drawn by himself.

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Pepero, the Boy-Artist

A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

JAMES JACKSON JARVES, JR.

BY HIS FATHER

*WITH A PORTRAIT AND THIRTY
ILLUSTRATIONS*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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TO THE READER

The advice of friends who knew the boy, with my own persuasion that his example of serious study might do good service to other youths whose chosen vocation is Art, induce me, after long hesitation, to offer this brief sketch to the public, as well as to his personal friends : to share, with those inclined to partake, a narrative, which viewed in any other light is of too private and sacred a nature to be lightly shown to strangers. Were it not for the profound lesson the lad's life affords to lads of similar promise in the soundness of the principles and intense application and passion which guided his intuitive choice of an aim in life, I would not overcome the reluctance to disclose so deep a sorrow to the world's gaze. But I believe there is in the universal heart of humanity a vital sympathy with, and appreciation of, simple truth and sincerity of purpose, however personal, if told without exaggeration in view of a general utility, that will ensure a welcome to this tale in the spirit in which it is written. A gifted friend and author, whose "love and admiration of Pepero," to use his words, were almost equal to my own, wrote of him : "There never was greater promise lost to the world than when he died."

Only those, however, who were familiar with the boy's daily life can quite appreciate the full meaning of this heartfelt eulogium.

It is scarcely just either to my son or his friend to merely present this story in justification of our opinions. There was very much in his daily talk, opinions and actions, in his entire devotion to art and science, and the rare qualities of his mind and heart that was better felt than can be expressed by words. My own are inadequate to delineate his character and aims as they daily, hourly, impressed those who saw him in the modest sanctity of his life-effort. Consequently I say but little, preferring to leave his own unachieved work and hints of the powers in him to tell in their own way to kindred tastes and ambitions the story of his few short years of earth-life.

PARIS, MARCH, 1888.

WORK.

“If some great angel spake to me to night,
The awful language of the unknown land,
Bidding me choose from treasure infinite,
From goodly gifts and treasure in his hand,
The thing I coveted, what would I take?
Fame’s wreath of bays? the fickle world’s esteem?
Nay, greenest bays may wane on brows that ache
And world’s applauding passeth as a dream.
Should I choose Love to fill my empty heart
With soft, strong sweetness, as in days of old?
Nay, for Love’s rapture hath an after-smart,
And in Love’s rose the thorns are manifold.
Should I choose Life, with long succeeding years?
Nay, earth’s long life is longer time for tears.
I would choose *Work* and never failing power
To work without weak hindrance by the way,
Without recurrence of a weary hour
When tired, tyrant Nature holds its sway
Over the busy brain and toiling hand.
Ah! if an angel came to me to-night,
Speaking in language of the unknown land,
So would I choose from treasure infinite.
But well I know the blessed gift I crave,
The tireless strength for never ending task,
Is not for this life. But beyond the grave
It may be I shall find the thing I ask;
For I believe there is a better land,
Where will and work and strength, go hand in hand.” *

**All the Year Round.*



JAMES JACKSON JARVES.

The subject of this biographical sketch was born at Florence, Italy, March 10th, 1869. He was named after the writer, his father, James Jackson Jarves. Owing to his vivacious disposition, physical energy and activity, he speedily acquired the pet nickname of Peperone, contracted into Pepero, which was first given by the Italian domestics, but soon adopted by everyone. It was so characteristic that it clung to him, and he was never called amongst us by his proper name.

A poetical neighbor, P. Pietrocola Rossetti, a cousin of Dante Rossetti, with whom he became a great favorite, was so impressed by his sprightliness that he composed the following *jeu d'esprit* and subsequently printed it in a little volume of his poems at Florence in 1876. Mr. Rossetti had been the first to call him *peperone*, or great peppercorn, on account of his vigor and forcible, jocose self-assertion whilst at play. Before he could stand alone and was obliged to be supported by his *cestino*—a wicker cage broad at the bottom and narrow at the top, used in Italy for babies—he would dart across the room gyrating with outspread arms like a whirling dervish, with a rapidity that made one giddy to look at him; his hand-

some features and dark eyes gleaming with fun as he escaped his pursuers and evaded their caresses. Putting aside the partiality of a parent and looking at him as he was then, solely in an artistic and physical aspect, I venture to say that a handsomer, healthier and more harmoniously developed infant in body and brain it would have been difficult to find. At this period no one surmised the direction his mind would take in its rapid growth. All loved him for his genuine boyish nature; his roguery and agility; the sparkle of his intelligence; the ingenuity with which he diverted himself and his indifference to the usual fulsome endearments bestowed on engaging infancy.

It was the frequent observation of these qualities which inspired Signor Rossetti to compose his poem, calling it “Pepino”—the *nome d’amore*, love name “of J. J. Jarves, jr.,” a softened diminution of Pepero. No translation, short of a born poet’s, can do justice to the rhythmic delicacy and fancy of his verses. Their subtle, joyous play of words and spirit baffle transcription into prosaic Anglo-Saxon. They have now become a very precious souvenir of his happy infancy, embalming, as an insect in amber, the spirit and form of the “*caro e simpatico bambino*”—dear and sympathetic child—as his Italian friends always called him. Here they are :—

PEPINO

NINNA, NANNA

« Tutto fuoco, e lampi, e fiamma
Ne' belli occhi sfolgoranti,
Rimirate l' amorino
 Mio Pepino,
 Solfanino,
Ruba-côri della Mamma.

Creatura inerme e frale
Nel cestino rinserrato
Salta come un' angellino!
 Di' Pepino
 Farfallino
Dove mai nascondi l' ale?

Ei non parla, e ognun l' intende;
Non favella, ma cinguetta —
Ma il parlar del bambolino
 Mio Pepino
 Cinguettino
È d' amor che l' alme accende.

S' egli viene dalle stelle,
Certo, è Marte il suo planeta,
Perchè questo paladino
 Mio Pepino
 Litighino,
Urla e batte le sorelle.

Sè dal pargolo dell' Ida
Viene, egli è tonante Giove,

Chè nel suo furor divino
È Pepino
Un Achillino
Che minaccia, e tuona, e grida!

Se da Pallade discende
Egli è cima di dottori,
Ma il saper del mio bambino
Bel Pepino
Saccentino
Dotto è tal che raiun l' intende.

Se da Venere egli viene
Guai per tutte le fanciulle!
Perchè il vispo cicciutino
Mio Pepino,
È un amorino
Ch' arde il sangue nelle vene.

Ma nell' impeto d' amore
Sclama onnai la Genitrice :
Questo caro Cherubino,
Bel Pepino,
Brindino,
M' è venuto dal Signore! —

Tutto fuoco, e lampi, e fiamma
Ne' belli occhi svolgoranti,
Rimirate l' amorino
Mio Pepino,
Solfamino,
Ruba-côri dalla Mamma! »

The following rude, prosaic translation of Mr. R.'s poem may give, to those unacquainted with Italian, some imperfect idea of his meaning :—

PEPINO

NINA, NANA (lullaby).

All fire, lightning and flame
In his beautiful flashing eyes;
Behold the Cupidino,
 Little volcano,
Who steals his mother's heart.

Creature unarmed and frail
Within his wicker cage,
Jumps like a little bird,
 Pepinino—
 Little butterfly,
Where do you hide your wings?

He talks not; all understand him,
No speech, but prattle—
The language of the boy-babe.
 My Pepino,
 Little chatterer,
Is of love that fires the soul.

If he come from the stars,
Surely Mars is his planet;
For this little knight—
 My Pepino,
 Little disputer—
Shouts and strikes his sisters.

If from the cradle of Olympus
He comes, he is a thundering Jove.

This in his fury divine,
Is Pepino,
An infant Achilles
Who threatens, thunders and scolds.

If from Minerva he springs,
He is the wisest of scholars,
The learning of my boy,
Beautiful Pepino,
Conceited little one,
So wise that none understand him.

If from Venus he comes,
Beware little girls!
For the chubby fellow,
My Pepino,
Is a Cupidino
To fire the blood in the veins.

“ In the ardor of love ”
Now exclaims his mother,
“ This dear Cherub,
Beautiful Pepino,
Lively little blond,
Comes to me from the Lord.

“ All fire, lightning and flame
In his beautiful eyes flashing,
Behold the god of love!
My Pepino,
Little volcano—
Heart-robber of mama.”

Pepero gave indications of a love of the beautiful
at a very early age. Indeed, he was averse to asso-

ciate with persons not comely in his eyes, always manifesting an intuitive repugnance to physical defects. Making a visit with his mother when he was three years old, in seeing some indifferent pictures on the walls, as he left the house he exclaimed : “ How can —— live in the sight of such things ? ”

His sisters and he had agreed to draw the curious things they saw in the streets as a sort of game. The elder girls did their part in the usual juvenile fashion of triangular heads with dots and lines for features of men and animals. Pepero, on the contrary, began at once to introduce into his designs eyes, noses, mouths and forms in general after nature, not being at all pleased with the orthodox hieroglyphics of early childhood.

He was five years old when he surprised his companions by a regular composition. Being permitted to attend school with his sisters, when the teacher was out of the room he went to the black-board and drew a cow with a number of droll imps skipping on its back in a ludicrous fashion. It was so cleverly done as to surprise and amuse all the pupils and win a pardon from the teacher on his return for the breach of discipline and the excitement it caused. Pepero's cow and devils were a laughable tradition of the school ever afterward.

In his earlier years he showed small disposition for book-study, or none at all, but was active in boyish sports and amusements. Thoughtful and of

quick observation, he preferred the society of adults. His health was so uniformly good and his personal appearance so fine that he seemed to us all to be an ideal boy in strength and looks.

Young as he was he began to be interested in the lives of eminent artists, preferring to hear about Michael Angelo to all the others. He was still disinclined to read himself or to learn to write. When rallied on his ignorance, he would retort : "Michael Angelo would not study when a boy and yet he became a great artist." This, with similar remarks, were the first indications he gave of any special bias for art. Indeed, in picturing myself his possible future, I thought he might choose some adventurous, active career, something that would afford scope for his physical energies, or else the career of a scientist; for his mind was eminently logical, questioning, analytical and penetrating in its primary action. Apparently he had a physical and intellectual constitution equal to any aim in these directions.

In his seventh year a change took place. He became more quiet, reserved and almost solitary in his habits, ceasing to care for his playmates, and intensely eager to hear and talk about art. He loved to ramble alone about Florence, studying its monuments and the shop windows where modern art was exposed. His remarks on all he saw indicated a critical and humorous disposition, and were singularly just, entertaining and original. He was not long con-

tent to merely observe, and began to ask for materials for work. These were given with a view to amuse rather than as a serious occupation. But he speedily convinced us that he was in sober earnest in his use of them.

About this time his health began to cause some anxiety, although no alarm. In May, 1876, he came back to Florence from a visit to a villa at Signa with a cough that never altogether left him. His general condition seemed so sound that we looked on it as only a temporary indisposition. It could not, however, long be disguised that he began to lose, slowly it is true, his look of beautiful, perfect boyhood, such as the old Greeks rejoiced in as the divinest of gifts. He grew more and more delicate in appearance, with an increasingly thoughtful look. Long walks, hill and mountain excursions were, notwithstanding, as much a pleasure as ever. Indeed, his ambition knew no limits in this kind of exercise. Believing that it would strengthen him, he was permitted to go to the Apennines during the hot months, and occasionally to join in the excursions of the Alpinists. He held his own with them, not only without apparent exhaustion, but with an ease and agility that surprised his adult companions.

Whether it were wise, in the light of subsequent experience, to have consented to these protracted walks, despite his enjoyment of them, may be doubted. Indeed, his physicians soon pronounced against moun-

tain air and recommended the seaside. Here the pulmonary symptoms rapidly grew worse. Thenceforth, a medium air, between the two, was sought in summer. With unremitting care, this régime served to prolong his life for a few short, alas! how short, years!

It is unnecessary to dwell longer on his continued and increasing invalidism from this period, other than to explain the difficulties he encountered in his pursuit of art; to show his physical limitations, and the little time that he could give to its study. Our experience was the too common one of deferred hopes, alternating with gleams of possible cure, which attend all cases of slow decline. We could not forget that the first seven years of his young life had been passed in a degree of sound health that rarely falls to the lot of any mortal. No sufficient cause could now be detected for the extreme delicacy of constitution and the change which had set in. Hope, and even a belief, that the original vigor would reassert itself, constantly sprang up in our minds amid much fear and trembling. But thenceforth it became a saddening, prolonged, fluctuating struggle for us all to preserve his foothold on the steps of time, deluded by the heart's theory that at his age he must outgrow his complaint. As for himself, so insidious and changeful were his symptoms that he never seemed to realize their fatal tendency, but regarded his frail condition as his normal phase of life up to the very

last year of his being. Every fear, if any, and other feeling were absorbed in an intense desire to work; to express himself in art. How much he was self-cheered by the idea that good health was only a question of prudence and time, we never knew. He never complained of suffering, or indeed anything. But there was so much philosophical stoicism combined with a sensitive reserve and regard for others in his character, that he undoubtedly concealed much that he felt or doubted, lest it might increase our sufferings, and also not to admit that all the efforts to save him could have but one fatal ending. He would neither confess nor acknowledge anything that might by any possibility lessen his zeal and right, as he viewed it, of work. Sorrowful he often was, when withheld from doing all his spirit craved, and at all hours, without the relaxation that even the strong man needs. While working he was supremely content and happy; experiencing a degree of pleasure that few mortals win from any source even with superabundant health. The short periods of study allowed him were prized as emphatically his own and not to be broken into for any reason. The usual limits were from half an hour to one hour, occasionally extending his working day to three or four hours, besides the intervals of rest. So jealous was he of every minute that the loss of a single one was a real torture. "My head is so full of ideas, I must work them out or die. I would rather die than be idle!" he would pro-

test. Even the time given to repose was prolific of inventive thought to be subsequently noted down.

Once having given his word not to exceed his time, whatever the temptation might be to do more, he scrupulously kept it. But he rigidly exacted every second that he could call his own and he left undisturbed with his thoughts and work. The greater part of the day had to be taken up with outdoor exercise as the best panacea that could be proscribed for him. For a time he was permitted to go to the galleries of Florence for an hour or two several times a week with a student's pass for making notes or sketches. These visits were unalloyed bliss. Instead of looking superficially at many objects, he concentrated his attention on a few of the best until he knew each thoroughly. Nothing escaped his acute observation and retentive memory.

He was never strong enough to frequent studios, attend the academies or schools, work from life or follow any of the usual methods of art instruction. Besides his own much interrupted and broken observations and exercises, the help of engravings, photographs, casts, etc., the sole help he had was from an artist friend, a clever genre painter, who gave him some lessons in elementary drawing and hints on the use of materials. But both he and other artists, after seeing the skill and invention he showed in his own work, declared they could teach him nothing. All that he needed was to observe the methods of eminent

artists by frequenting their studios, particularly their ways of manipulation, and to study direct from nature. But this was just what he could not do. The time never came when he could follow their counsel, although he so hungered and thirsted for it.

All that he accomplished was the fruit of solitary, unaided study, in his sparse working hours. His habit was to destroy his sketches because they failed to satisfy his ideal. No praise ever made him think one whit better of anything he ever did and no adverse criticism ever disheartened him. Knowing what he wished to do, and failing to satisfy himself, he was indifferent to the opinions of others. In truth, his ever-rising ideal would have always soared above his reach, however prolonged his life had been.

Silent, modest, and reserved, it was with extreme reluctance that he ever consented to show anyone his attempts. It has been almost by force and stealth that any were preserved. Some of the best he ruthlessly destroyed without warning. By photographing a few of his drawings and designs unknown to him at the time, and selecting from the studies found in his portfolios at his decease, I am able to give an imperfect idea, in the illustrations, of the direction and quality of his boyish art.

Before explaining them, I will relate an incident of his twelfth year which shows what an emphatic hold Michael Angelo had taken of his mind even at that early age. Indeed, his passion for this

artist was a veritable worship. His mere name inspired him with reverential awe. In character and in work Michael Angelo was his great example and ideal. He cared not for the companionship of anyone who did not share his sentiments and appreciate the great master as he did himself.

Previously, the sense of beauty and harmony of the Greeks had most impressed him. Phidias continued to receive an almost equal share of his admiration, but his epoch was too remote and his works too little known or too inaccessible for them to excite in him so vital an interest as did those of the immortal Tuscan which he daily saw, and whose memory is still omnipresent in his native land. Not that he ever faltered in his appreciation of classical art, as some of his designs serve to show, but the supernal character and profounder imagination displayed by Michael Angelo, joined to a more mystical basis of thought, took a deeper hold of his mind.

As time rolls on, no greater name than Michael Angelo yet appears in art. The sober judgment of posterity confirms and strengthens that of his contemporaries, whether he be viewed as sculptor, painter or architect—a supreme genius, humanly speaking. This would not be his own estimate of himself, although that was high, because none knew better than he the limitations of human effort to control and shape matter. But the combined grasp, sweep and depth of his imagination lifted him to the topmost

pinnacle of known creative art. Some other artists excelled him in the softer elements of graceful beauty, variety of fancy, and what may be termed exquisite taste or classical elegance, on the basis of purely naturalistic art. But in his chosen field of the supernal, that which in invention transcends the natural and aspires to an ideal of power and meaning above and beyond ordinary human perception and experience, Michael Angelo stands alone; a solitary figure in art, of, as yet, unsurpassed grandeur, not to be comprehended by superficial thought or glance. Indeed, a first look may repel because of seeming exaggerations of line of muscular force, besides the difficulty of penetrating his entire aim. But, as insight into his world of creative art dawns on the mind, it is both humbled and exalted by a genius altogether different from what we have heretofore accepted as the loftiest standards of the world's art; humbled by our previous ignorance and mistakes; and exalted by a revelation in another which discloses hitherto unknown depths in our own capacity of appreciation of mental and spiritual forces latent in our common humanity.

Indeed, to adequately understand Michael Angelo is equivalent to a liberal education in the highest realms of art. In making this statement I include what has been frequently denied him—a mastery of color, as on the ceiling of the Sixtine Chapel, which is on a par with his supremacy over form. Here he shows himself in each equally strong, forcible and harmonious.

His sense of beauty is guided and controlled by a majesty of types and a standard of interpretation of humanity inspired by a spiritual consciousness of its infinite aims and immortal being, that surprises and bewilders the spectator before he is prepared to partly seize his meaning and enter into his world of thought. Not until he can do this may he say that he has seen Michael Angelo.

The complete appreciation of this wonderful artist comes spontaneously to but a few gifted minds; rarely to anyone except in the maturity of his faculties, after long and patient study.

Looking back on my earliest impressions of him and sundry criticisms I was rash enough then to make on his works, I am startled at my blindness to the supernal world he invited me to enter. But to confess ignorance and presumption is also to note advance in the right direction. Unless we are self-convicted from time to time of errors by the enlargement of our horizon of knowledge, we remain stationary in a befogged intellectual centre, clinging to our own petty poles of mental conceit and spiritual darkness. It is, indeed, a favorable indication when light ahead, however dim, can be seen, towards to which we are prompted to grope our way. A removal of the ideal of life from one point to a higher, at whatever cost of shattered idols, reinvigorates the soul and brightens existence. A criticism kindly made me in a letter on the publication of my first book on art in

1856—"Art Hints," a crude but sincere effort—by Mr. Ruskin, was most just. Referring to my remarks on Turner, he wrote me: "I think you are not so much *wrong* as short-sighted in nearly all you say about Turner," adding: "I think you have the true feeling for art and will be very useful in the good cause."

"Short-sighted" might have been applied with similar truth to many other artists, chiefly Michael Angelo. As my wish to learn was sincere, some progress towards a more just comprehension of art and artists has possibly been made, however much remains to be done. My apology for this personal allusion is that it offers a striking contrast to the experience I am relating of quite a different nature—the experience, be it remembered, of a boy of but ten years old when he first began to comprehend and be swayed by Michael Angelo. A taste developing to a passion, which under the trying restrictions of incessant invalidism, besides the freshness of extreme youth, may be considered as phenomenal. It was no passing, superficial emotion, but was intensified with his growth, until it became the keynote of his own art life. Finally, it was modified by a broader appreciation of whatever was good in all art, and was leading up to an original and independent style of rich promise when his career was so suddenly and tragically closed. The various steps and changes in this development of his own individuality, as shown by his sketches,

form an interesting psychological and artistic record.

But I am digressing too much from the incident I began to relate.

Pepero had been confined to his bed for some weeks, when, on becoming able to rise from it, he called aside his mother to impart to her as a great secret his wish to celebrate the birthday of Michael Angelo in his own room, in his own fashion, using his pocket money for the purpose.

“Your own birthday comes four days later, why not celebrate that?” she asked

“Oh no!” he answered, “that is nothing. I am nobody. Michael Angelo is the greatest artist that ever lived, and I want to honor his.”

“You shall have it all your own way and it shall be kept as secret as you wish,” was the reply. “You will, of course, ask some of your young friends to come!”

“Not at all! They do not understand or care for Michael Angelo. I want only my parents, sisters and Aurelia” (an aged family servant to whom he was much attached), and some artists whom he named. And so he went to work in his own fashion to carry out his idea.

When the evening came, it was indeed a surprise to see what this feeble invalid of eleven years, unaided, had done in honor of his revered master. The little bedroom was transformed into a species of *chapelle ardente*, without the paraphernalia of death, and

adorned with every possible souvenir of the artist he could get. Could that stern, solitary man have seen the spectacle, even he would have been moved by the homage of his juvenile admirer.

Evergreens were tastefully hung about the room, interspersed with festoons of variously tinted Japanese lanterns which shed a mysterious, æsthetic light over the scene. On a sort of altar, at one side, there was placed a plaster bust of Michael Angelo. Suspended by a fine wire, invisible in the subdued colored lights, there poised two colored *amorini* or boy angels about to crown the bust with a laurel wreath. These were drawn, painted and cut out of pasteboard by Pepero himself. Behind them there were photographs of the "Last Judgment," of the Sixtine Chapel and other works of Buonorotti. In front there was a large plum-cake into which were placed eleven lighted wax candles of different colors, giving the whole the look of a church altar. He questioned the propriety of this and did not wish to admit it, but consented at the urging of his sisters, who insisted on doing something for his birthday as well as Michael Angelo's.

The delicate lad, with his thin, pale face and slight figure, quivering with emotion, was seated on a high stool, welcoming his guests and expatiating on his hero, ending with what was intended for a cheer, in which all sympathetically joined, greatly touched by the scene.

Enjoyable, suggestive, almost weird, it truly was;

but saddened by the then dawning fear that the author of the fête might not see another. Yet he was spared to renew it again on the next anniversary of Michael Angelo's birth, with greater decoration and more guests, several of whom were eminent Italian artists who were moved and astonished at such a tribute to Italy's greatest art-son from the little, wan American boy, whose life was trembling in the depth of his emotions. With them came Charles Heath Wilson, an English artist and author of latest life of Michael Angelo. As he turned to leave, he said to Pepero : "The spirit of Michael Angelo is looking down on you and appreciates what you are doing in his honor. He will be the first of kindred spirits to welcome you above."

Pepero survived Mr. Wilson two years. But he never was able to repeat again the celebration, being prevented by increasing invalidism and absence from his home in search of the unattainable strength he so coveted that he, too, might be an artist. This longing was always in his thoughts. Life had no other value to him. To possess a studio and be able to work was his dream of earthly bliss. He looked forward to this almost to the last, never wholly despairing, although sadly eager to obtain his wish. He would say : "I had rather be a poor boy, sleeping on a doorstep and eating a crust of bread, and possess a studio than anything else." His romance of happiness was to shut himself in one from morning to evening and

be free to work as he pleased, unhindered and unobserved. But to labor in art for mere money or praise was a repugnant thought. For artists of this stamp he had no respect. Neither would he consent to show anything he did to those who did not regard art as a serious and almost divine thing : to real judges, he would quietly say, it was not worthy of their notice.

When twelve years old he drew in crayons on a large cartoon a figure of an archangel of surprising vigor of pose and beauty of form, floating in the air with outspread wings, showering good gifts upon the earth. It was a very original and suggestive idea. An Italian artist of much repute, to whom the boy reluctantly assented to its being shown, praised it most enthusiastically, scarcely believing his eyes, and remarked : “Not one of us could have done it.”

A few days later, the fact of this drawing having got about, an eminent figure painter of the Florentine school begged to see it. He was equally surprised at the free conception and execution, but being very academic in his own style, he suggested to Pepero a little change in the outline of the legs. Suiting the action to the word, he caught up a crayon, and changed them into what Ruskin calls the kicking grace of Moses and Elia's in Raphael's Transfiguration. Pepero's countenance showed that he did not approve the alteration, but he said nothing and restrained his feelings. No sooner had the artist left, then he burst into tears—the only time I ever knew him to shed

a tear—and exclaimed with bitter sorrow : “——has spoiled my work; he does not see my idea at all,” and soon after destroyed the cartoon. It had lost all value to him. The change had weakened the strength of the action and expression. This was evident enough to a critical eye, but we deplored its loss, for it was a remarkable composition in every light.

In justice to him I ought to add that were he living, he would not consent to the publication of any of his studies or sketches, for he regarded all alike, as crude, imperfect work, tentative and experimentive; indeed, they are to be viewed only as an untrained boy's efforts, feeling his way amid uncommon difficulties to the career of an artist. But they help to confirm my often expressed opinion that sooner or later there will spring up an American school of art, of a national character, as vigorous and original as any of other lands in the past centuries. For doubtless there are many others of our youths quietly striving to this end and biding their opportunities.

During the wearisome seven years of his invalidism he never showed impatience or uttered a complaint. Persevering, quiet, cheerful, with a rare feeling for humor and fun, his intellect steadily grew brighter and more profound as his body weakened. Once he remarked : “I am so decayed; like a spoilt egg,” as if apologising to himself for not doing more, adding that he wished no more visits from physicians. “They do not know how we feel inside” — telling one of his sisters

“I have no fear of death; I shall be the first to go.”

However, it was seldom that he alluded to these topics, for his extreme reticence in all that regarded himself was a characteristic trait. Art was ever the welcome theme and the discussion of whatever related to it.

His chief ambition was to do large work both in painting and sculpture like the old masters. He tried wood carving and wished to etch. This could not be permitted lest the acids and the nature of the work should aggravate his cough. At his very urgent solicitation some clay was provided that he might model, as an experiment.

He began a statuette of a wounded, dying youth, lying on his back, his knees partly drawn up and his hands and arms thrown backwards, with the head falling between them in the act of expiring. There was something both of the Adonis of Michael Angelo and the Cain of Dupré in the attitude, but the feeling and characterisation, with the treatment of details, were quite his own. Pepero intended it as a gift to me on my return from America, where I then was. Having completed it in clay it was cut in marble by an experienced workman; but the marble fails to give the best points of expression and the anatomy of the original cast. The collapse of the frame, fainting, dying languor and general sentiment are pathetically beautiful. As the first production of so young an artist it surprised all who saw it. But the sight of it, gra-

tified as I was by the talent shown, and tribute of love to me, fell heavily on my heart like an unconscious prophecy of his own early doom; a knell from a gaping tomb to the sound of which I vainly strove to close my ears. Yet I think, he chose the *motif* for the opportunity it presented of overcoming anatomical difficulties and embodying a sentiment of classical origin, at which the greatest artists had tried their hands.

He was proud to have made this beginning in sculpture, but insisted on keeping it out of sight, hidden away in his room, under lock and key, which he would intrust to no one. Some visitors who had heard it spoken of desired very much to see it. With some difficulty it was obtained and shown. They exclaimed: "How wonderful, how beautiful! How could he have done it all alone?" When told, he rejoined: "I do not care what persons say; I know myself it is not good."

Reading that Hawthorne, when he wished to write, shut himself up in a tower in his house, putting his chair on the trap-door by which only it could be entered, he observed: "He did right; no one can do anything with people coming in to disturb them; one must be alone."

Commenting on the practice of those sculptors who fit up show-studies connected with their houses, so that all callers may be easily allured into them by their decorative display, he exclaimed: "I wish one

into which nobody from morning to night can enter, except a boy to bring my food." His time passed only too quickly when left entirely alone occupied by his work.

In his frail condition of body it was pitiable to witness his silent, deep-felt longing for a studio like other artists. He was too proud and considerate of us to give pain by useless utterances, but we could see what was gnawing at his soul. Especially he craved the free use of clay that he might attempt some large composition. Also, he wished "wings" to go where and see what he pleased. To appease a longing so intense that it began to consume his scanty stock of vitality we obtained for him an artificial, flexible substance made in Parma for modelling, as a substitute for clay, being less damp and more easily worked. With it he began at once an alto-relief of more than twelve figures, about eleven feet by five, representing the Death of Priam, a subject which has been treated by more than one eminent artist of classical proclivities. The very nature of the topic would imply a certain similarity of composition. In this instance Pyrrhus was shown with uplifted sword and powerful grasp dragging the unresisting, aged Priam by the hair to the altar on which he was to be immolated by his unrelenting foe. These two figures formed the central group. On the right Hecuba was fainting, amid an affrighted crowd of her maidens, half clinging to and half sustaining their sinking

queen, all aghast at the horrors of the sack of Troy and slaughter of its people. Behind this admirably posed group, in flat relief, spectrelike, was seen the tall form of a withered crone, like a Hecate or Fate, one long arm circling the victims and the other outstretched, with a powerful, menacing gesture threatening the son of Achilles as, with gleaming eyes and expanded mouth, she devoted him to the avenging deities.

This phantom form, strongly modelled, was the keynote of horror of the spectacle, which was imbued with the very spirit of Æschylus as a whole. The contrast between the young and handsome Greek warrior and the trembling old man, the graceful maidens and the hopeless, aged queen, the cursing hag, the varied emotions and actions of all effectively and harmoniously combined into an artistic whole, on this side, was well balanced on the other by a companion group of young people of both sexes, overcome by terror, powerless to fly, in various attitudes of despair, seeking to shield themselves and their sight from their own fast approaching doom, yet more appalled at the sacrilegious death of their venerated chief than at their own fate.

Action and drapery throughout were treated in accordance with the rules of the best classical art. The composition, even in an unfinished state, elicited warm encomiums from the few artists and individuals who were permitted to see it unknown to the boy.

Before its completion he was obliged to go into the country to escape the great heat of Florence. This was in 1884. He had modelled them directly from his head, without the help of a cartoon or drawing to assist him in the details of costumes, architecture, etc., frequently changing and correcting as he went on; for his memory of things once seen in his studies was astonishing. Everything seemed to be stored away in his brain, ready at call to be turned to special account. On his return from the country in the autumn he had decided to make some radical changes in the central group.

The Hecuba part of the composition was so complete and fine that I feared to have him change it, lest some of its beauty be lost, wishing to have it photographed in order to preserve some idea of it in case the whole was never finished. But I was detained at our villa a few days after Pepero had gone back to Florence in October. When I returned I went at once to his room, only to find him standing over the débris of the relief, more pleased than regretful. He told me the heat had so cracked it and the material had grown so hard that he could not to go on with it, and so he threw it all down, intending to begin it anew and modify it considerably. But the time for it never came, as we soon left Florence on his account for the softer air of Rome; and indeed, his strength was inadequate to model longer in any substance whatever.

Many flattering opinions from competent judges had been expressed regarding this relief, but none made him regret its loss, for he was so conscious of being able to do even better. "People talk," he would say, "just for the sake of talking. How can any one criticise statuary when they know nothing of anatomy? When people know nothing about what they admire, why care for their criticisms.?"

Such was the constant tenor of his remarks, whether referring to painting, drawing or modelling, whenever asked to show his work. These ideas are not uncommon with adult artists of established fame, but scarcely to be expected of a youth in the first flush of trying his unfledged powers. He was invariably his own most severe critic. Before attempting the Death of Priam, he had made anatomical studies in plaster of such correctness as to cause one of Italy's most renowned sculptors to say that they were so true to life he could suggest no changes.

But previous to plastic work he had tried to paint, in oil, heads and original ideal compositions. Not being able to visit studios or take any regular lessons in the manipulation of colors, his sole resource was to feel his way step by step towards those results which are usually taught as the first lessons of beginners. Before he was thirteen he had made what was considered by others promising progress in this way : Dissatisfied with himself that he had not attained to something approaching to the magical flesh-tints of

Titian or Correggio—for nothing less would content him—he destroyed all his studies in oil, postponing practice in it to a later period.

Early in his fifteenth year Pepero virtually gave up all art-work except anatomical drawing and occasional practice in pen and ink or pencil, such as might be suggested by his regular studies. All that had been done until now he said was “mere play.” It was time to begin to study seriously and systematically with the aim of preparing a solid foundation for his art. Instead of longer imitating the example of Michael Angelo in his boyish opposition to book-learning he asked for a tutor, not merely to study geometry, mathematics, scientific perspective and those branches of learning requisite to form a complete armory of instruction for a true artist, but also to carry out an university course of history, poetry, philosophy and general literature, supplemented by Greek and Latin. An accomplished tutor was found, admirably qualified by learning and disposition for his needs. He adopted his methods with great good judgment to the physical condition of his pupil, making it chiefly oral, with frequent intervals of repose and such exercise as he could bear.

It may be asked, why was he allowed to study at all? Simply because study was his life. Without constant employment of his mind he would have been too wretched to live. His physician and tutor on their part so regulated his studies as to spare his body

and not to fatigue his mind as much as it was possible to do in his precarious state of health. Both entertained the theory that when he had passed the critical period of youth he might grow to manhood with at least a moderate degree of strength—a welcome but delusive idea. Still, short as was his life, I am convinced that his studies did prolong it. He was so happy in them, so obedient to every rule, so free from any special suffering, ate and slept so regularly well, manifesting none of the worst symptoms of consumption, that hope never altogether forsook us. To the last, his face was singularly free from the distinctive tokens of his disease. Strangers could not credit how serious it had become.

The winter of 1883-1884 was passed on the Riviera at Monte Carlo and Mentone, by the advice of the physicians of Florence. Away from his passionately loved city and its associations he was unhappy and always pining to return. He endured the exile patiently, hoping for the best, but complained that he could not study and was disinclined even to work except on some colored anatomical drawings which were highly and beautifully finished. When urged to divert himself with original designs, he would reply as an excuse for himself, "You know Canova could not work out of the atmosphere of Rome."

After his return to Florence in April, 1884, he never could endure any allusion to either place, so painful had become the memories of lost time. For

him their picturesqueness had no charm. Indeed, nowhere was he attracted by the merely beautiful in the landscape; not even the olive-clad environs of Florence flanked by the billowy Apennines with their villa and castle crowned heights did he especially care for. When he saw a few months later for the first time the Roman Campagna a cry of joy escaped his lips, as he took in its silent grandeur of desolation and sweep of savage plain disappearing in the purple shadows of the vapory mountains. All this appealed sympathetically to his imagination. The ocean, too, and whatever was broad and grand in feature and sentiment gave him joy, but to the merely pretty in nature or art he gave no attention.

During the summer of 1884 at Fiesole he began a course of architectural studies, particularly classical, with a degree of interest and comprehension that convinced me he wished in the future to make architecture his chief aim, and sculpture and painting subordinate to it. With the exception of a portrait bust in prepared *creta* which was begun but soon relinquished as too fatiguing, he occupied himself solely with those studies which would give him that scientific basis of art he held to be necessary before he could call himself an artist. His facility of drawing and invention never induced him to give up any of the time allotted to the severer studies for the pleasure of indulging his fancy and skill of hand in work not called for by them. Drawing was as facile to him as

playing by ear is to many in music, but it could not seduce him to depart from any rule of self-control he had laid down for himself. The difficult, and not the easy, was his aim. It is true that the sheets in which he worked out mathematical problems were covered with pen and ink caricatures or sketches of muscular action, as a momentary play for his fingers. All, however, had some relation to the study before him. After his death, there were found no original designs like those of his second period, or copies like those of his first, from the drawings of the old masters. The only exception, if they may be considered such, were a few studies of his own head in different attitudes, one of which was signed and dated and more finished than the others. All were done unknown to any of the family. Possibly, they were hastily thrown off in spare moments as experiments. But to me they now seem most precious, although perhaps unconscious, tokens on his part of a speedy farewell. If any presentiment of this nature cast its shadow on his mind he kept it scrupulously to himself, otherwise than in secretly embodying it in the shape of these touching souvenirs of himself and his beloved art—a revolution of his inmost spirit in lineaments of extreme delicacy, with his dark, earnest eyes gazing into futurity out of the soul's prison of flesh.

Among the notes of his study I found one in Italian showing the importance he attached to an artist's

thoroughly acquiring the grammar of the profession before appearing to the public. He was no believer in the not uncommon practice of acquiring a knowledge of it at the expense of others by the sale of crude work, or what we might appropriately call the studio chips of an untrained hand, however promising. His maxim was the best or nothing. He writes: "To aid the progress of art is the chief scope of every kind of knowledge; without it art would be only sterile vanity. Not a small part of its merit is due to the study of external anatomy, provided it does not burden the memory with a multiplicity of empty words foreign to an artist's speech—words intended by writers to indicate the muscles, etc. It is of much greater utility to know their derivations and progress to their final termination, the uses of the same and their relations to each other."

The paragraph is unfinished, but, although a little vague in form, the meaning is clear. Whether borrowed or not in idea from some book it conscientiously defines the guiding principle of his own anatomical studies, which, beginning with the bony structure, proceeded in order with the muscles, blood-vessels, nerves and skin, from the best medical books, until he was able to reconstruct the perfect body in its infinite variety of movement. This practice was supplemented by closely observing human and animal forms and action until he acquired a knowledge of them not always to be seen in the works of adult artists of established

reputation. It was a sad sight to see him frequently examining his own attenuated limbs to demonstrate the attachments and action of his shrunken muscles and to hear the admiration he expressed in seeing beauty and perfect development in others. He was unconsciously studying more for another life than for this; for there was to my mind a sacred awe in these investigations. It was only too evident they were not destined to bear fruit in this world. After viewing Canova's works in Rome he admired him more than any other modern sculptor, particularly his profound knowledge of anatomy. He was enthusiastic over the feet and hands of his statue of Pauline Bonaparte in the Borghese Villa. Conscious of his own power of invention, he had become most solicitous to master form and action, believing that the imagination, however fertile in creative thought, would only limp, not walk serenely, without this accomplishment.

I will give a few extracts from a letter in Italian written me by his tutor after his death. They will serve better than my words to illustrate his general intellectual character and capacity.

Mr. Taccini writes: "The first moment I saw Pepero I felt I was in the presence of a boy the like of whom I had not met in my twenty three years' experience as scholar and teacher. We were both mute at first, regarding each other interrogatively. But when I began to speak of art and the great artists, his eyes shone with animation. I had touched his

weak point. For Michael Angelo he had the profoundest admiration, telling me that not merely in Italy but in the entire world there was no greater man. When he spoke I listened with great attention, because I found his judgment was invariably true and just and without presumption. His genius, for he had true genius, had no other need of encouragement than his own conscience, which said to him, 'You can do this; do it.' This burning desire devoured him to his very last evening, as I, more than anyone, can affirm, knowing the sublime aspirations of his great soul.

"Dante had always been my passion, and I had studied him for several years. Yet, each time I re-read him, I confess I found difficulties in regard to his real meaning that stranded me. But for Pepero there were no difficulties. In his thirteenth year we had gone over together and commented on the 'Divine Commedia,' and I never had to repeat twice the same thing, nor did he have to exert his mind in the slightest degree to comprehend him. It is noteworthy that after more than a year's interval without having taken up Dante, when something recalled him, Pepero commented on him with such precision, repeating my own words of two years before, that I remained stupefied. He then cited the comments of others, quoting the anonymous Roman and Venturi which I had at that time incidentally repeated as absurd and had quite forgotten the fact. His memory was prodigious,

and his enthusiasm for the immortal poet as singular as rare. I remember to have seen him almost beside himself during lessons which lasted nearly an hour. 'It is impossible that Dante should not please,' he would say. To this I replied: 'There are many who do not like him because they do not understand him.' His precise words in reply were: "It is because they confound or jumble the political and the theological meaning, without paying attention to the beautiful pictures (*bei quadri*) of the 'Divine Commedia.'

"In his heart I think Dante had now taken a little of the place of Michael Angelo.

"Whilst pursuing Dante he had also made a complete course of Italian literature, grammar and rhetoric. A course of study which for anyone else would have occupied from four to five long years he had accomplished without effort in a year and a half with very little daily work, enriching his memory with whatever historical, astronomical, mythological, philosophical and theological details and allusions that are to be found in the poems of Dante in particular.

"After Dante we began the study of other authors, but they failed to give him equal satisfaction.¹

1. As an illustration of Pepero's choice for reading, independent of his regular studies, I give the following list of books he bought for his own use during the winter of 1884-1885 at Rome:

Goldoni's *Comedies*, Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Ugo Foscolo's *Poems and Tragedies*, Alfieri's *Works*, Homer's *Illiad and Odyssey*, *Dialogues of Galileo on the Systems of Ptolemy and Copernicus*, Costa's *Elocution*, Vignola's *Architecture*, Uguccioni's *External Anatomy*, Gamba's *Anatomy and Physiology Applied to Fine Arts*, Barozzi's

“It was the same in art. Few things escaped his severe rules of criticism, formed on his own profoundly studied secrets of art, in all the works of Michael Angelo. He and Dante bear the closest relationship. Pepero said their genius was equally immense and akin. One day he said to me, enjoining secrecy, ‘I have need to learn how to make verses. I shall divert myself as well as I can in writing poetry.’

“It was phenomenally singular that whilst he took so strongly to literary artistic studies, he was no less drawn to positive science. For himself both were equally to his taste and desire. Michael Angelo having been at once painter, sculptor and architect, Pepero was inspired by a like ambition. ‘But,’ said he, ‘to become an architect it is necessary to understand mathematics. I cannot go on without them.’ Fortunately, I had made them a special study, so that with some effort, I began again with him, seeking to fatigue him as little as possible. After a few lessons we came to the famous problem of Pythagoras, one of the snares of students, the Ass’s Bridge. Studying only a half hour daily he had made such progress that this was quickly solved by him. I remarked: ‘Pepero, I have given lessons in pure mathematics, geometry, etc., but to have reached the point you have arrived at in so few

Practical Perspective, Boidi’s Manual of Architectural Design, Vannini’s Civil Architecture and Life of B. Cellini, all in Italian—a selection of books made and purchased without consultation, or knowledge even, of any of the family; for it was his habit to keep all his little possessions out of sight under lock and key.

days, with other pupils it has taken never less than eight or nine months, and it is a great marvel to me how you can understand it so well and so quickly.' 'Oh!' he answered with great simplicity, 'I do not find any difficulty in it.' It was true; there was no difficulty for him to learn anything he wished."

Oct. 20th, 1884, we moved from Florence to Rome for the winter, persuaded that its climate was more favorable to our invalid. There had been no specially alarming symptoms indicating any speedy change for the worse. His studies were punctually followed; he was able to go out daily, and he looked forward to seeing Rome with intense interest. I was detained myself in Florence a few days longer. His elder sister wrote me his first impressions, which I give :—

"Pepero acts as if the place were going to suit him. He is so enthusiastic that he cannot imagine how any artist could live in Florence when he could live in Rome. He thinks everything is perfect—could not be finer—and he does not care to see any other place in the world, now that he has seen Rome. It is very affecting to see this small and delicate looking boy stand before the great master's works and look in ecstasy upon them, with perfect pleasure burning in his face. He is such a contrast to St. Peter's that I could not help contrasting the creation of a work that so small an individual as man can accomplish only by his brain. Pepero seems to be in his element here, breathing the air that the old masters he vene-

rates breathed, and he exclaims : ‘Michael Angelo was here, he saw this and that,’ etc.; and is enchanted with the dome of St. Peter’s and its proportions. I take him about, and, though he does not talk much, it is a pleasure to show things to such an admirer. Yesterday we were a long time in the Forum, and he said he seemed to see Cæsar and Cicero; exclaiming, ‘Those are the stones on which they trod,’ etc. He added it would be perfect happiness if he could take the premier prix at the Salon of Paris and then be sent here to the French Academy of the Villa Medici.”

The absolute enjoyment of his few weeks in Rome, and his full appreciation of all he saw; are a consoling souvenir that words may not express. It was a fitting conclusion to his brief earth-life, as the end prepared for him by the Divine purpose drew nigh. Amid his new-found enjoyments he never trespassed one minute on the hours of his regular studies. I took him to the Vatican to see masterpieces so well known to him by photographs. They were as familiar in every detail as if he had passed his life in their midst. Not a glance was given to secondary objects, for he reserved all his strength to study the principal statues, especially their anatomical points. The Belvedere *torso* was a special revelation and inspiration. Winckelman would have rejoiced to see how completely he took in at one look its surpassing modelling and to hear his critical remarks. But it was torture to me to see his attenuated figure, enveloped in

shawls, standing in rapt enjoyment before the great marbles of the Vatican and the paintings of the Sistine Chapel, unconscious of fatigue and unmindful of the attention he drew on himself from the guardians and visitors, whose looks of commiseration and wonder were undisguised, as at times they dropped words of sympathy at the only too manifest condition of his health. For days afterwards, as he recalled what he saw, he would exclaim, "What statues! What statues!" uttering not another word. When he first entered St. Peter's, his observation was "What proportions!" and then he proceeded to examine the architectural details. After seeing the best works of Raphael, he said : "Compared with Michael Angelo, Raphael is weak." Some one was reading to him Kenyon Cox's article on Michael Angelo in the *Century*, in which he speaks depreciatingly of him as if he would not or could not finish his work and was greater in suggestion than execution, when Pepero quietly asked : "Does he call the Sistine Chapel unfinished?"

A writer describing Herkomer's studio makes him say that the only great woman artist is Rosa Bonheur. On reading this Pepero's comment was: "Rosa Bonheur created nothing; she only copied animals, which is the lowest kind of art." Imitation and mere copying he would not recognise as true art. Only creative invention, original ideas and not simply reproduction, however clever, answered to his definition of high art. Looking at some of the best American work in

Rome and Florence, he observed : “These artists do a few things very well, and then become careless and turn out hasty, imperfect work,” at the same time pointing out defects in modelling and drawing that are often overlooked even by old artists. While doing justice to Vedder’s rare powers of composition he regretted his deficiency of graceful outline and sense of beauty, which a more careful study of the human frame might remedy.

As he began to realize in Rome, as never before, the immense scope of art, how much there was to do and his inability to do it, he grew more silent and reflective. I cannot call his mood absolute sadness, for he was ever ready to make and enjoy a joke. By nature he was inclined to merriment. Only a few evenings before his last one on earth he laughed so heartily at a humorous tale that we almost cheated ourselves into the idea that after all his illness might not be as grave as we had thought. Although he never referred to his complaint, it was soon evident that he was feeling more and more the weight of his mortal chains and longed in some way for his freedom. On the 19th Nov. he took a drive in the Campagna. The 20th was rainy and he stayed indoors. In the afternoon he recited as usual to his tutor, put away his books and materials with his customary scrupulous neatness and care, and after discussing with Signor Taccini Alfieri’s poems and asking if he were a materialist, laughed and joked, saying as he

bade him good bye, "Geometry to-morrow." At 6 o'clock I left him eating his dinner with good appetite, whilst we went to ours. His was finished and ours but half done when the electrical bell of his bedroom struck a sharp note and immediately after it was repeated. Rushing to him we found him lying on the floor by his bed, breathing his last, with the blood gushing from his mouth. He was unconscious, and his death painless and instantaneous, as one might wish to go from this world of sorrow and imperfection to one of joy and perfection; free at last with no prolonged agony, but transported as in a chariot of flame from mortality to immortality. In going from one room to the next, summoning us to come to him and sinking slowly to the floor, he had passed from darkness to light, from his earthly to his celestial home, to the latest moment in the full enjoyment of his rare intellectual powers and love of art.

The physician said a blood vessel had given way close to the heart. But what mattered the material agency so that he triumphed over death and suffering? A sweet smile settled on his lips such as was common in his playful moods, as if it had been given him the power to animate his lifeless form with a gleam of his newly-found bliss, to console us with the assurance that his ideal world was now open to him. We felt it was well with the boy, and thanked the Master that He had spared him a lingering, pain-

ful entrance into His kingdom. As he had dressed himself on the morning of the 20th, on the 24th Nov. he was put into the earth amidst the flowers and foliage of the Protestant Cemetery, where repose the remains of Shelley, Keats and a host of kindred spirits. But he is not there, mouldering in the damp ground. His soul, unstained in his short world-life, pure and undefiled, flew on its long-yearned-for "wings" to where there are no mourners and no sin; where progress in truth and beauty is eternal; into one of the "many mansions" of Him who had permitted the lad to gladden our hearts for awhile and then recalled him to his true home.

No "blasphemy of grief" need be felt. A merciful summons had called him to where he was free to work as he wished. Shall parents mourn at such a life and release for their loved ones? Ought we not rather to envy his early release? He was precious to me by more than common earthly ties. He was more than a son. For he was a revelation in my eyes of the possibilities of our coming school of American art; indeed of all art, founded on genuine inspiration, and developed by systematic training; an art which should harmoniously combine reason, imagination and religion. I had hoped against hope to the last moment that he might be spared to reveal, in tangible, intelligent shape, those principles of a lofty, idealistic art which have been my conviction of its true mission, and which by the pen—

the gift by example being withheld — I have sought to advocate. The Giver of all good gifts had bestowed this talent on my son to supply my deficiencies, and to demonstrate by an elevated art what I could only feebly suggest by writing in opposing the low realism of the art of the day. His ideas of art were not taught by me. I do not think he ever read anything I ever wrote on the subject. His intuition surpassed all my own slowly acquired convictions. One glance of his observing eye was worth more than hours of observation of the average spectator or student like myself. Could it have been otherwise than that a thrill of paternal pride should permeate my soul whenever I looked forward to his possible future? I hoped much from his work and companionship in his manhood. But I believe it is now better with him than it ever could have been here. He came and went like a beautiful vision, accomplished his purpose of mortal being and passed tenderly and lovingly into the joy of his Master.

When frail Nature can no more,
Then the spirit strikes the hour;
My servant Death, with solving rite,
Pours finite into infinite —

What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust; hearts' lives remain
Hearts' love will meet again. —

EMERSON.

As a valued friend beautifully wrote: "Your boy resembles a drop of dew which disappears from this rude earth whilst the morning is still fresh and pure." It was even so.

A few words more will suffice to explain more completely the mental developement of the boy-artist. It was not a precocious phase of childhood, but a natural, orderly sequence and unfolding of faculties in a normal progress of study and reflection, with much calculated to retard rather than hasten them. Art was the dominating passion, yet the reasoning and perceptive faculties were as active as the imaginative, and capable of being directed to any aim. His imagination neither seduced his judgment nor led him into deceptive enthusiasms. On the contrary he was remarkably cool and what practical Yankees call level-headed, inclined to question things almost to the borders of scepticism and to challenge proofs. His theory of practical work in art was based on a severe scientific training and on positive studies, which he enjoyed as much as he did any purely æsthetic gratifications. The comprehensive rapidity of his observations and judgment gave the impression of spontaneous intuition, as if knowledge came without much effort or reflection. But his conclusions were in reality the result of much study and well-sifted and trained thought, by which the chaff was separated from the wheat.

Politics, history and geography also occupied his

attention, whilst a subtle play and sparkle of humor ever illumined his conversation with the few adult friends with whom he felt at ease. As one of them said to me: "We never cared to talk platitudes with Pepero, for they met with cold reception;" adding quaintly, "He always fired into the sky, and I have no doubt that he has attained at last the paradise of his dreams."

His mind was more philosophical than religious. Of death he said : "We must all die; it is nothing." To a friend who was encouraging him to hope for improvement, he replied : "Why wish me to remain here where I can do nothing?" The ordinary pleasures and honors of life were no incentives to him to work. He seemed indifferent alike to all. As a rule, he was shy, silent, undemonstrative, with considerable timidity of self-assertion; always shrinking from observation or publicity of any sort, yet holding firmly to his opinions. Intense feeling seemed to paralyze action. But not a little of his love of solitude, besides the desire of being uninterrupted in his occupations, was due no doubt to the physical weakness which debarred him from the companionship and exercises proper to his years. Courage and daring were his prominent traits when well.

Marked refinement and extreme modesty in habits and words characterised him to such a degree as to make it seem impossible that anything to the contrary could enter his mind. In studying the human form as he was obliged to, he was as impassive to the differences

of sex as if they did not exist for him or had no other meaning than art symbolism or any neutral fact of nature. No truer example of the saying that "To the pure in mind all things are pure" could exist. This trait prompted him to special refinement and neatness in dress and habits. He had no sympathy with Bohemianism in art—the careless dressing, general untidiness and eccentricities of speech and manners, affected by some artists. An artist, he believed, should be in all respects a gentleman.

He was generous; ever ready to give from his little treasures whatever might gratify or be of service to another, although so averse to showing or bestowing his own productions, on the plea of their unworthiness. Sound opinions and habits, mingled with a protective reserve and caution usually only begotten after repeated experiences in life and the dispelling of its many-sided illusions, were spontaneous in his character, manifesting themselves in a quiet wisdom and playfulness, never aggressive or dominating, that only those who knew him intimately could fully perceive and appreciate. To complete this roundness of individuality he had an equal degree of heart, which despite its stoical reserve, was sympathetic and loving to an uncommon extent in whatever concerned the welfare and happiness of those about him. One of his most attached friends, an Italian, wrote me : "I had always told him he had the heart of a Cæsar (referring to his self-control); but it was only necessary to speak

of the sufferings of another to see him change color and to manifest how sincere was his sympathy."

His sense of the ridiculous was remarkably keen. When listening to a comical story, if interrupted by a fit of coughing, he would give a signal to stop until it was over and then join in the merriment with heartfelt relish. His own humor was seasoned with poignant and suggestive sarcasm and wit, and his eyes were as expressive as the tones of voice. In imitation he was masterly; by a few subtle looks, gestures and exclamations he rendered living character as graphically as he could by the pencil. Possessing a very flexible voice, he was able to render with ludicrous accuracy and intonation the street cries of itinerant vendors, buyers of rags and, indeed, sounds of any sort. Nothing really escaped his observation even while he appeared to be quite inattentive or indifferent to the panorama of life about him.

On the more serious side of his character, his conceptions of God and religion, divested of doctrinal bias, were elevated and comprehensive. He was deeply interested in the different systems of religion and philosophy. The Deity represented to him the incarnation of goodness, truth and beauty; the veritable, all comprehending *bello*, only to be adequately realized in an existence freed from the illusions and suffering of this lower life. His view of religion was a simple, unspoken, unquestioning reliance on a Supreme Father who ordered all things wisely and well; a vivifying

faith that called for no public rites and needed no verbal formulas to keep it alive in him in his forced isolation from the busy, outside world. For his reason went direct to the core of truths, clear and incisive, lifting him spiritually above the vulgar fears and harassing doubts of the average human experience. Without disturbing his mind with fruitless theological speculations, he was fond of discussing with his tutor, the nature of God, immortality of the soul and kindred topics, in a philosophical spirit, avoiding the complexities of conflicting creeds, calmly observant and inquiring, as Dante walked in heaven and hell. He continued these topics even to the last hours of his life, and only a few minutes before he bade Signor Taccini what proved to be his last farewell, he begged him to remember what the great mind of St. Augustine believed regarding the sights and happiness of heaven.

Enough is now told to give those interested in his brief career an idea of its intellectual and moral aspects, its promise and its earthly ending. Short indeed it was, but very lovely to those who watched its course.

We are not to count years, but their fruit, in such examples of life. If we look at them only on the side of our personal hopes and loves, they are appalling in their shortness and sorrow. But do these fragments of a perfect whole end with mortal breath? I think not, despite that so many of the learned ones of earth declare in substance death to be the final ordinance

of nature and bid us be comforted, for it is the universal, inevitable lot. With them, from nothing we come, and to nothing we go. It cannot be so, for what are these precious fragments and examples but Divine pledges of a life beyond the grave; a life of illimitable progress and joy to those who seek to know the *Master*? This is my faith and consolation in an otherwise irremediable loss.

Among the many letters of condolence which came from widely scattered friends, proving how the great heart of humanity feels in sympathy in these trying events, there is one so touchingly brief and so welcome to a parent's heart, that I must give it; for it came from one who knew the lad and who is himself widely known, W. D. Howells. He wrote: "Your loss is all the world's loss too, for no more beautiful light of genius than his ever faded into heaven, leaving the earth forever poorer."

In selecting some of Pepero's drawings to illustrate this memorial of his life in order to justify, so far as they may, the opinions given of his capacity of art, the reader is again reminded that they are the productions of a boy from his twelfth to his fourteenth year; the slight sketch of his own head and one hasty humorous drawing only being done a few months later. I divide them into two sections—first, copies of drawings by old and modern masters, and, secondly, his own original designs. Unfortunately, all are more or less rubbed and worn, owing to the little care he

bestowed on them. They show, however, with what ardor he studied; the nature and the character of his choice of topics, their difficulties and with what facile fidelity of stroke, without systematic instruction or any direct study from life, he mastered the spirit of the originals; the fineness and accuracy of his pen-strokes, which would admit of no correction, the graphic fidelity of his pencil, the general breadth, boldness and largeness of his self-taught methods, and the courage and persistency with which he tested various styles. Only artists can fully appreciate his experiments in design and justly balance their merits and failures under his conditions of work. Those who are familiar with the autograph drawings of Lionardo, Luini and Michael Angelo can bear testimony to the skill shown in the copies of them done from photographs of the originals and the thoroughness with which he depicted their varied characteristics. This fidelity of reproduction is equally displayed in the imitations of the modern French school, which he took from *l'Art*. The anatomical studies bear witness to his earnestness in learning the elements of art. And it must not be overlooked that all these illustrations are simply essays in feeling his solitary way along the difficult path of fine art, and there is not one which he would have consented to show to the public as worthy of its notice, or that might be looked on as anything better than the mere chips of his little workshop, to borrow Max Muller's words.

SECTION I.

1. Copied from Michael Angelo's drawing of the "Damned Soul." Original in Uffizzi Gallery.
2. Copied from Michael Angelo's drawing of the "Female Head." Original in Uffizzi Gallery.
3. Copied from drawing by Lionardo da Vinci. Original in Uffizzi Gallery.
4. Copied from drawing by Luini.
5. Copied from drawing by Lionardo.
6. Copied, pen and ink, from *l'Art*. Figure.
7. Copied, red chalk, from *l'Art*. Head.
8. Copied, charcoal, from *l'Art*. Landscape.
9. Copied, charcoal, from *l'Art*. Marine.
10. Copied, charcoal, from *l'Art*. Camel.
11. Copied, pencil, Portrait of Titian.
12. Copied, pencil, from *l'Art*.
13. Drawing, red chalk. Anatomical study.
14. Drawing, after old Masters. Anatomical study.
15. Drawings, after old Masters. Anatomical study.
16. Drawings, after old Masters. Anatomical study.
17. Drawings, pencil. Anatomical study.

SECTION II.

- 18 and 19. Original compositions for a painting of the "Judgment of Solomon." At 13 years old.
20. Original composition for "Death of Goliath." At 13 years old.
21. Original composition for "Triumph of Alexander." At 14 years old.
22. Original composition, "A Joke of Two Friends." At 14 years old.
23. Crayon "Portrait of a Family Servant 76 years of age." A rapid off-hand sketch and faithful likeness. At 13 years old.
24. Drawings in pen and ink. Original and copies. At 13 years old.

25. Drawings in pen and ink, "Spirit of Evil and Minions." Original. At 13 years old.
26. "The Spirit of Good Showering Good Gifts on the Earth." Original. At 13 years old.
27. "The Spirit of Evil Throwing Down Evils on the Earth." Original and study. At 14 years old.
28. "The Last Judgment." Red and white. Original. At 14 years old.
29. Studies of action and form. First thoughts. Original.
30. Pencil drawing of his own head. (*See title page.*) Nov., 1884.
31. Statuette in marble of a Dying Youth. Original done in his 13th year.

Many of the above illustrations are simply rough and incomplete memoranda of ideas and movement, losing much in their twofold transfer, but indicating his bias in art and what direction it would have taken had he survived. Its tendency was not to landscape or modern realism, but human form and character idealized with a predilection for the grand, beautiful and supernal.

At the request of friends I exhibited "The Spirit of Evil" and "The Last Judgment" at the Boston Foreign Exhibition of 1883. They elicited considerable attention and criticism, and he received a medal for them.

Those who most admired them, however, thought it was singular, and almost to be deplored, that the imagination of a young lad should be so possessed of imagery and ideas which were morbidly terrifying and unwholesome. But they had no such effect on him, for it was only in an artistic sense of symbo-

lization that he regarded them. It is to be noted that equal skill and delight are shown in the humorous and classical compositions and the academic treatment of the later Renaissance schools. He was simply trying his unfledged powers in various directions.

No 20 shows a delicate pre-Raphaelite sentiment and treatment of landscape with special fidelity of detail. No 21 is classical in tone and is a pen and ink drawing 20 inches by 25. In a moment of pleasantry, while occupied with his mathematics, he threw off No 22, which evinces the humorous turn of mind he often indulged in.

Nos. 26, 27 and 28, studies, deserve explanation. The first may be called the Gateway of Paradise. Through it is seen an archangelic being hovering over the earth, blowing out of his trumpet *amorini* or baby angels, who are joyfully showering down on mankind good gifts and blessings in the form of fragrant flowers. The conception is wholly original with him, and would form an appropriate Christmas card or could be elaborated into a church window in glass.

The second consists of several sketches or ideas of "The Spirit of Evil," a Miltonic conception made into a composition that may be aptly called "The Gate of Hell". Satan, in a new form as the arch-enemy of men, is blowing through his terrible trumpet flames, which change into imps rejoicing in their mission to torment the sons of men. It will be remarked in the former drawing that the Good Spirit floats gracefully in the

air, self-suspended by his will, without the usual symbolic wing, etc. But the Bad Spirit soars aloft by the aid of wings of diabolical dimensions of power, wielding a sword of flame. His wrathful, malignant trumpet-calls, as he pours out diseases, famines, wars and every calamity on the human race, affright even his ministering Satans, who shrink back from their allotted task, but are held to their work in the coils of a monstrous dragon, which springs from and is part of the will-power of their chief, linked lightly to his not ungracious form, for he was in the begining an archangel of light and retains traces of the beauty which once distinguished him in the hosts of heaven. But out of his wings sprout up little imps of most diabolical form and looks of mischief. Beneath, in the burning pit, lost souls hear the awful clamor and are aghast; whilst their attending demons are gloating over the prospect of fresh victims and ministering serpents are hissing their venomous approbation. The rugged, rustic blocks of the columns of the Gate, with their architrave of ghastly, uncanny rocks, out of which come inhuman forms of consuming vices and crimes, with batlike wings and faces of nightmare horror, sounding an infernal fanfare, are in keeping with the capitals of the columns, which are formed of tongues of flame, in the midst of which are seen beings half-formed or half-consumed of archangelic figure but depraved volition, coming to contribute their forces to the misery and destruction of mankind. Emphatically increasing

the powerfully-imagined spectacle of horror, are two grinning reptiles of immense size, tiger-striped, with dragon's scales and ferocious claws slimily circling the columns with their sinuous, slow-gliding bodies; their pitiless eyes, repulsive jaws and savage heads, each with a distinctive individuality, fitly symbolizing the dread will power of the Lord of Sin and Death. The drawing is 18 inches by 20.

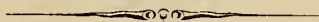
No 28, a red and white chalk drawing 20 inches by 24, is noteworthy for the vigor with which the heralds of the Archangel Michael blow their trumpets, summoning the writhing condemned to descend into outer darkness. Charon, seated on a double-headed winged dragon, waving a serpent as a scourge, hurries and harries them downwards. The variety of robust pose, movement, foreshortening and the general whirl and turmoil of the various groups, their despair at the sight of the yawning gulfs below and the expectant demons lurking in their depths, all combine to manifest the influence of Michael Angelo and a daring attempt to treat the same impossible theme—its very defects suggesting a masterly impulse and touch. Older, he would not have sought to cope with the "terrible" Tuscan, even in a single episode of a composition which needs more than mortal strength to handle. At the same time it demonstrates the quality of his ambition, with a result which even Michael Angelo himself might not have scorned at his age.

In keeping with the above designs is the rude

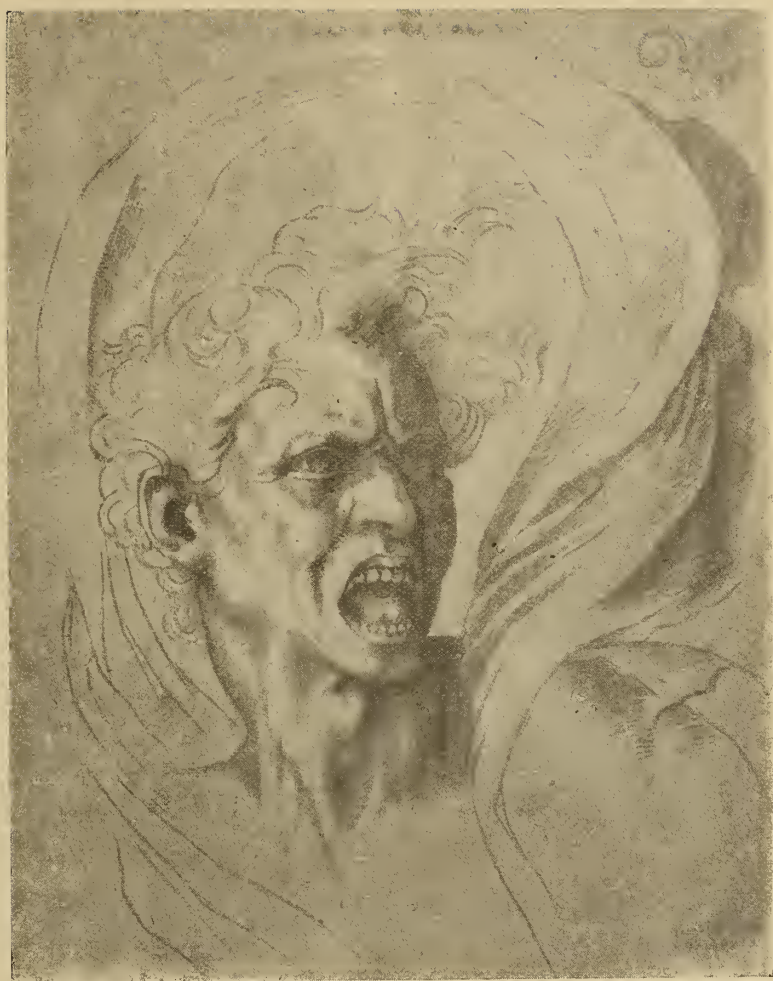
first-thought in red chalk of a Satan with demons of very original grimness of fancy threatening the earth, represented below them by a part of the ocean with a ship scudding before a furious blast that issues from the trumpet of one of the goblin satellites, whilst the whirls of a fast forming cyclone are looming up on the horizon. On the same sheet is the suggestion of angelic interference in a supernal form substantiating an imploring mortal and pointing upward. This *motif* was not carried out and seems to have been abandoned or postponed. There is a grasp and inventive idea more than hinted at that is worthy of Doré or other masters of the complex, mystical and supernatural.

Of a wholly different character, pathetic in its sweetness and expression of hopeless ending of youthful dreams is the plastic dying youth, taken from an unsatisfactory photograph of his first attempt at modelling in clay, done in his 13th year, an unconscious prophecy of his own fate.

No 30 is taken from the outline drawing he made of his own head a few days before his death.



DRAWINGS

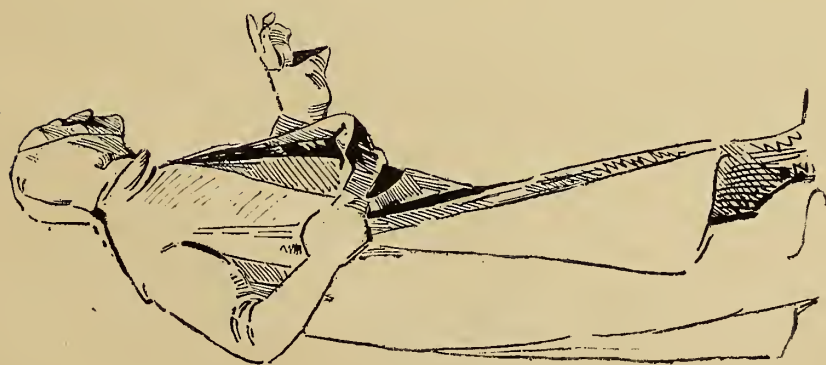




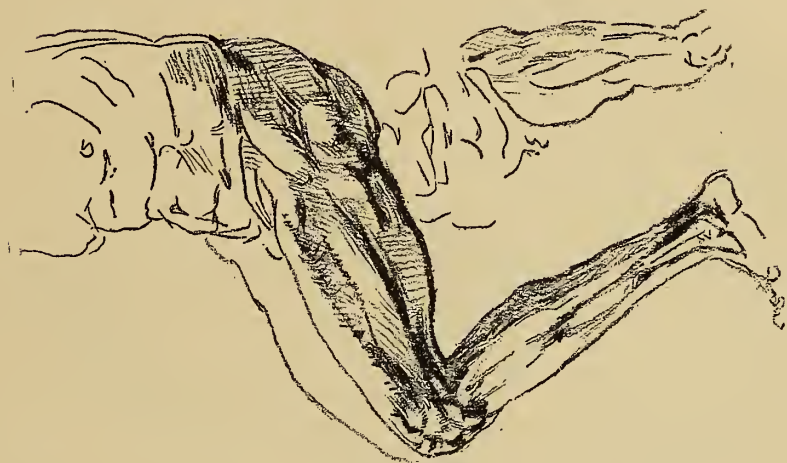








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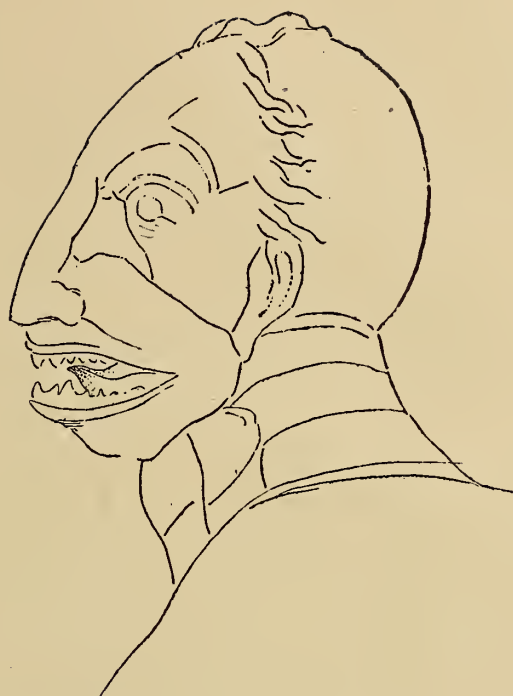
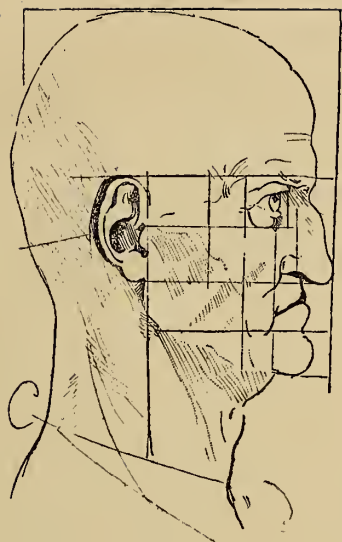


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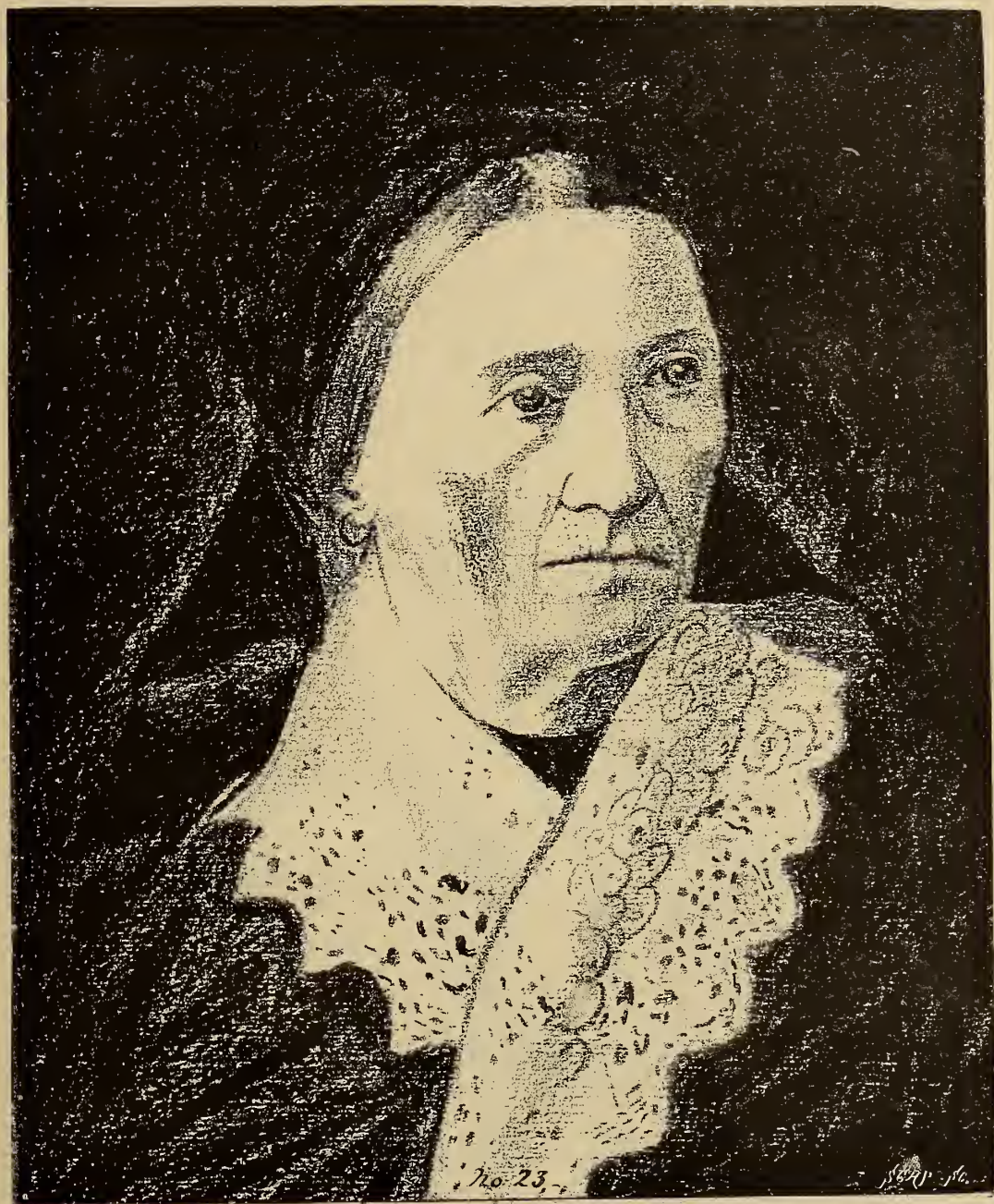


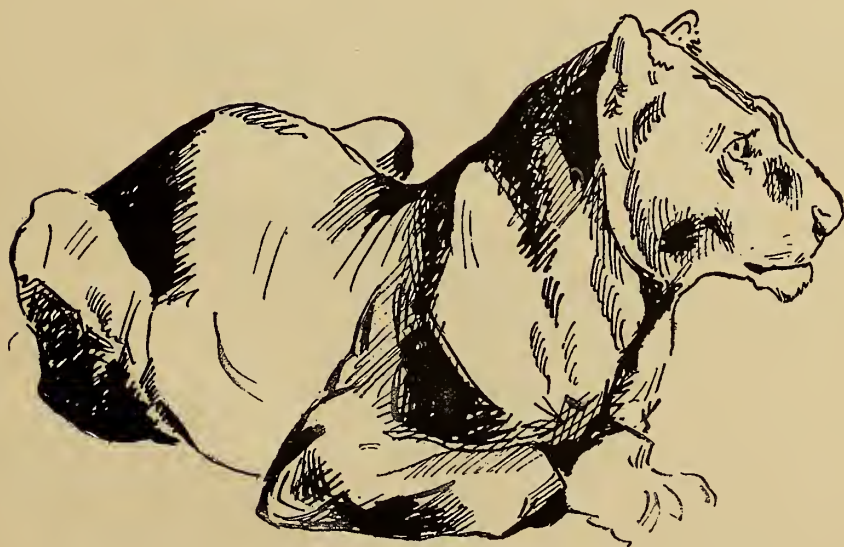
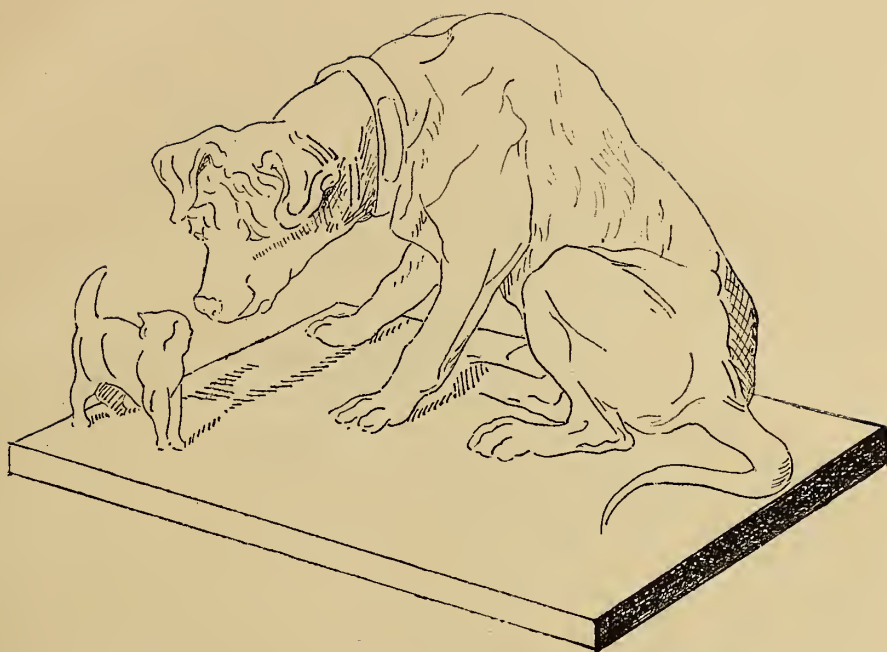
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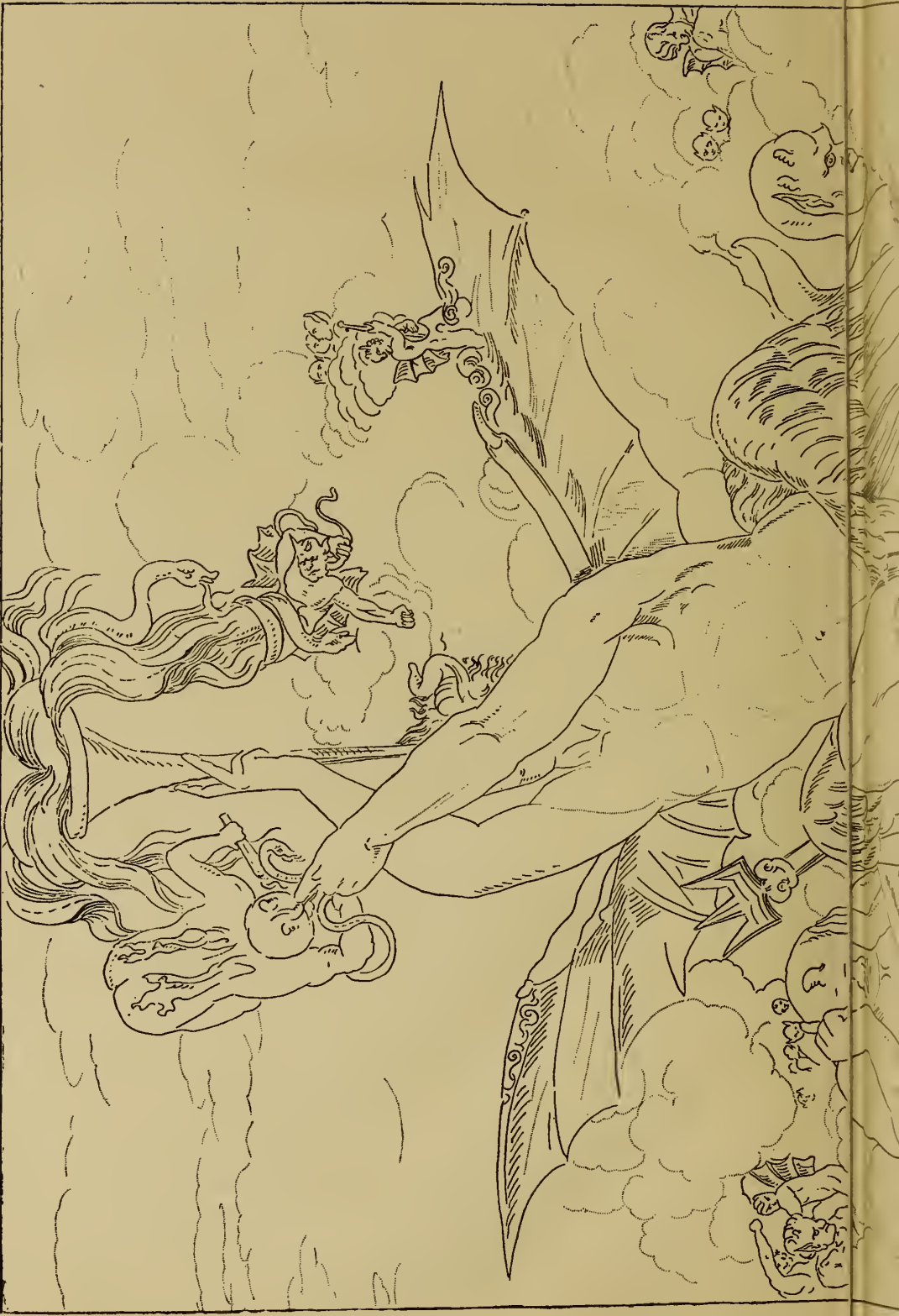
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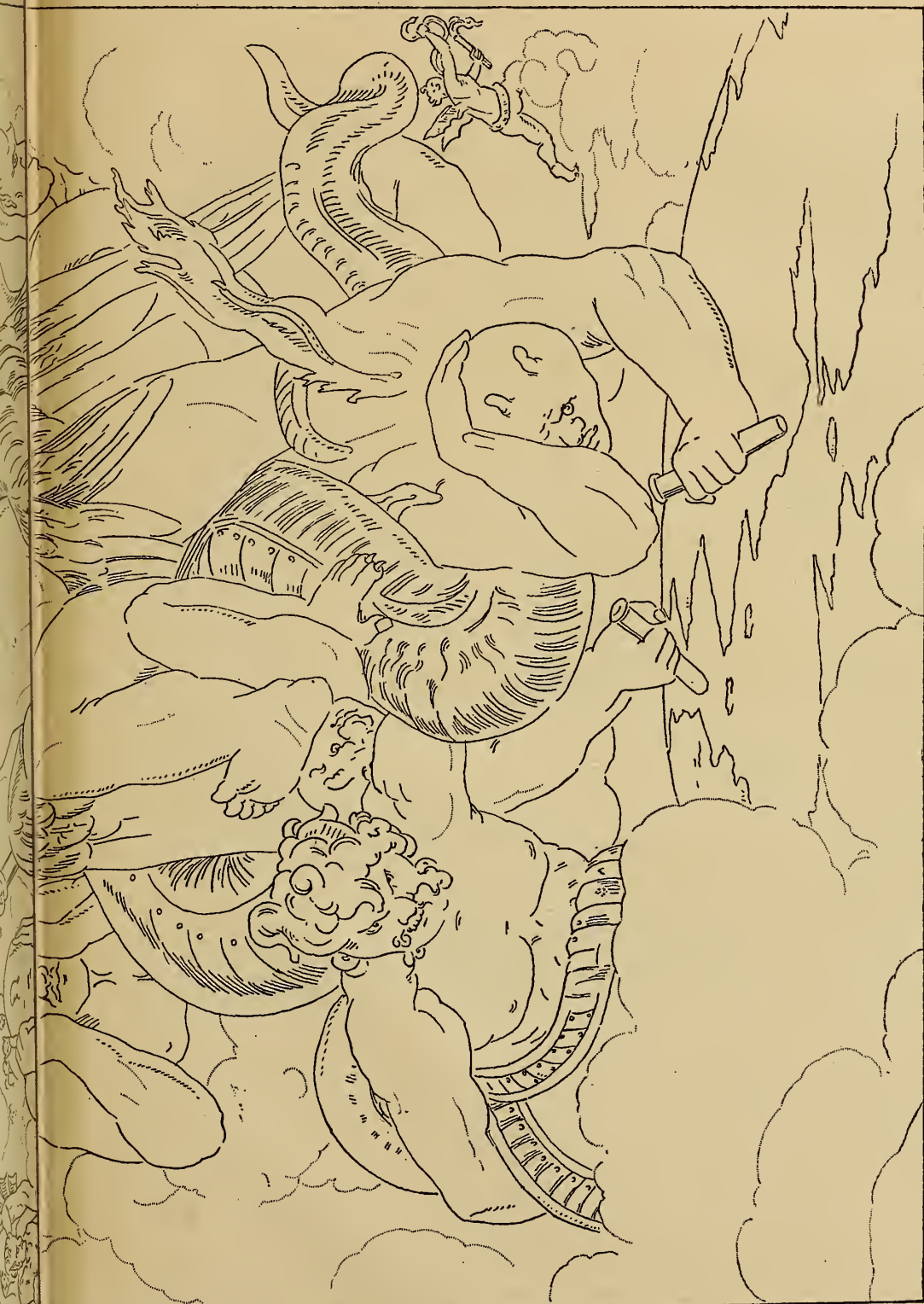








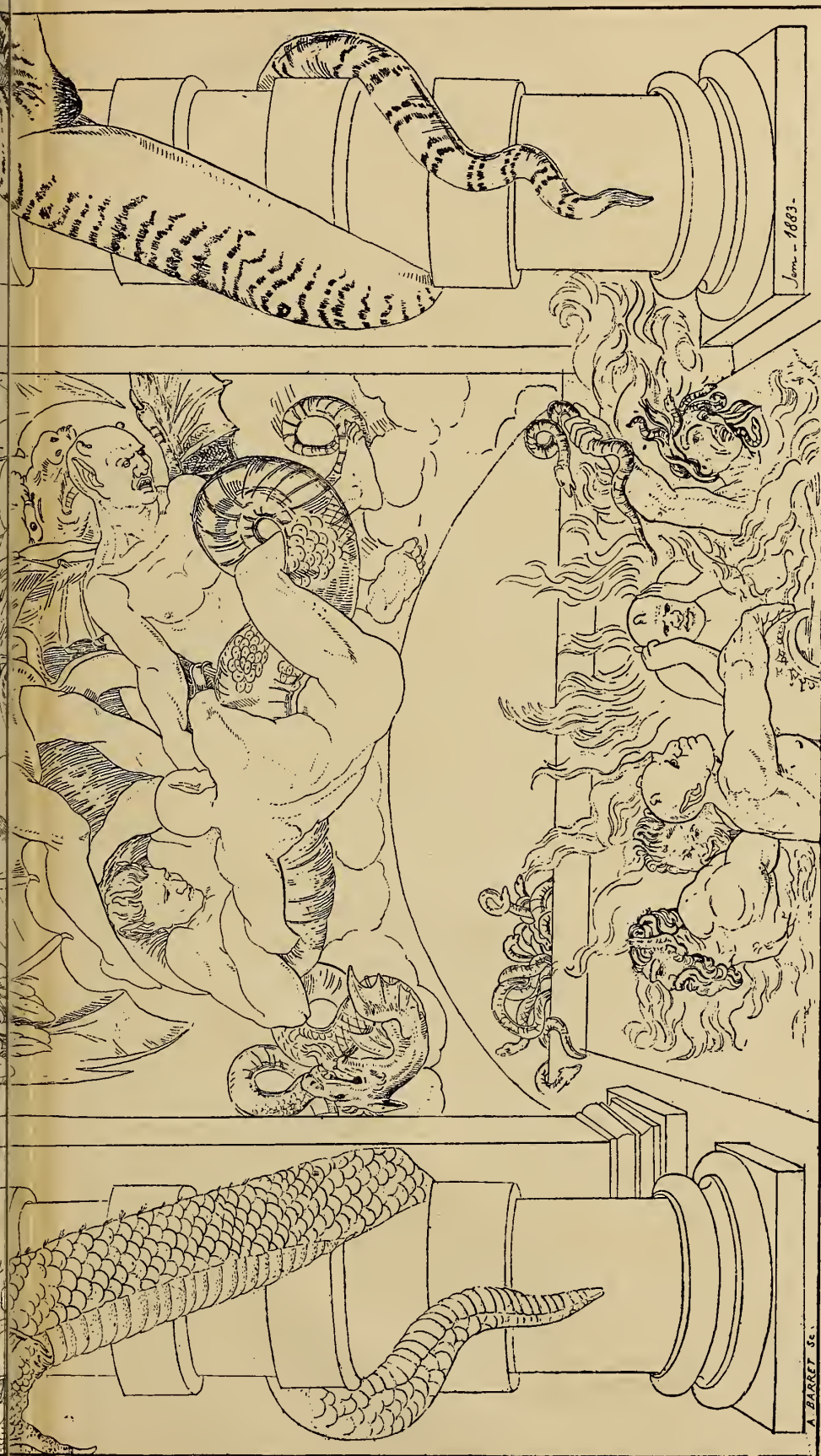




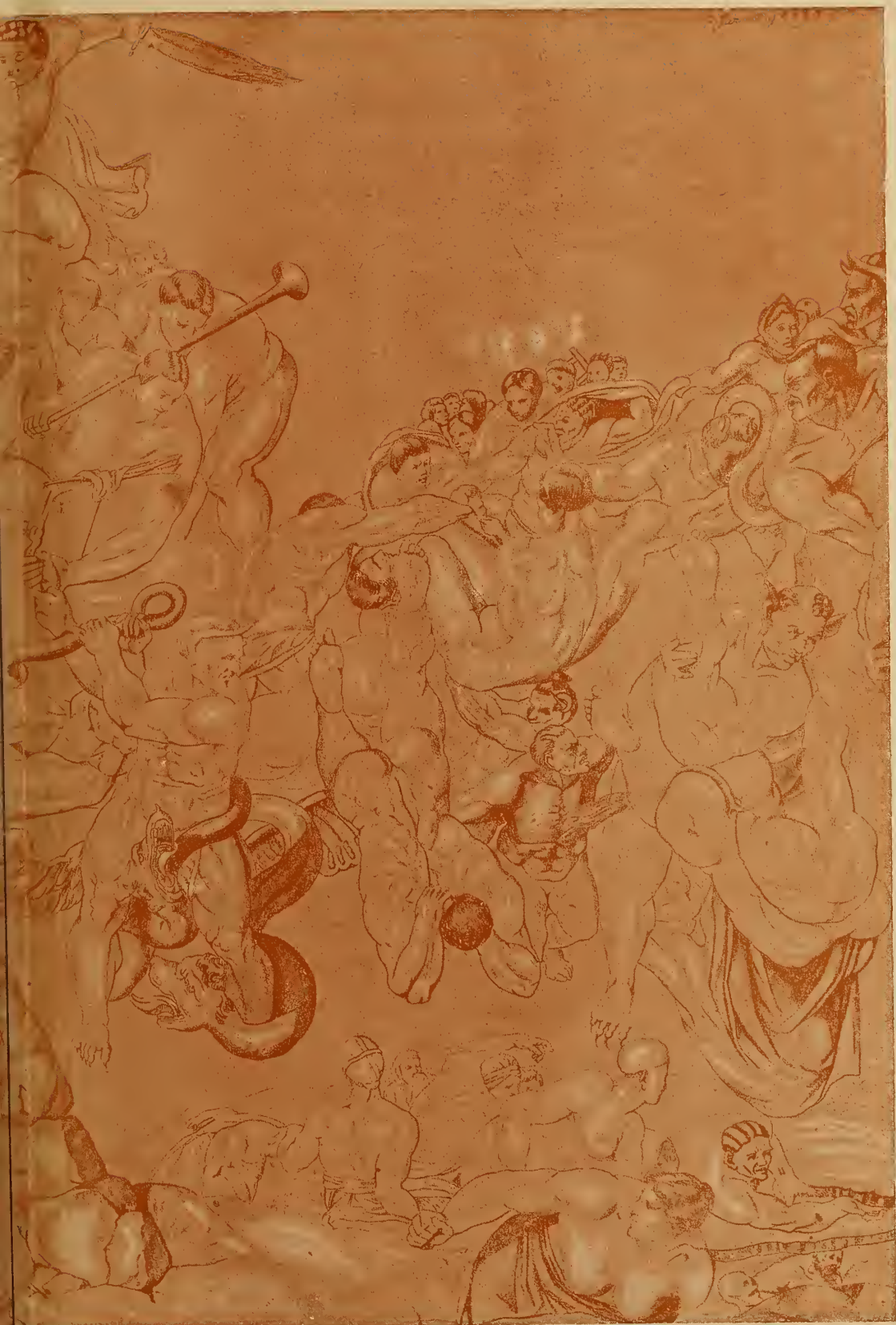










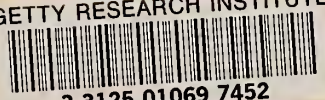








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